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Senate of Pennsylvania

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Environmental Quality Board  
16th Floor, RCSOB  
P.O. Box 8477  
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8477

RE: Proposed Rulemaking: CO<sub>2</sub> Budget Trading Program (#7-559)

Chairman McDonnell,

I am writing in support of Pennsylvania's joining of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), as part of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's public comment period for the Proposed Rulemaking: CO<sub>2</sub> Budget Trading Program (#7-559).

Joining RGGI is not only the right thing to do on behalf of future Pennsylvanians and the environmental health of our Commonwealth; it is also the smart thing to do in the here and now.

Joining RGGI constitutes a significant advancement in the long-term fight against climate change, as well as a commonsense way to immediately serve the interests of our state's economy and public health. As we approach the beginning of the end of the COVID-19 crisis, it is essential that Pennsylvanians and their elected leaders put aside partisan bickering and embrace smart policies like RGGI—policies that will help us lead more prosperous and healthier lives in the wake of the economic and public health crises wrought by COVID-19.

By joining RGGI, Pennsylvania will be standing alongside Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont (as well as Virginia, which is also in the process of joining RGGI), in the fight against climate change. Established in 2008, RGGI sets annual caps on power plant carbon emissions each year while gradually lowering these caps over time. As Pennsylvania is the fourth-largest emitter of greenhouse gases in the U.S., participation in RGGI is another step forward to fulfill our duty to protect Pennsylvanian's constitutional rights to clean air and water. Our joining RGGI is projected to cut PA's carbon emissions by 188 million tons by 2030, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). Thus, joining RGGI would be a major step towards reducing America's carbon footprint and combatting climate change. It is time that we, as Pennsylvanians, do our part and take that step.

The experience of other RGGI states proves that combatting climate change does not have to come at the expense of good jobs and a strong economy. To date, economic growth in RGGI-participating states has outperformed non-RGGI participating states by 31% over the past

decade. Research from the Pennsylvania DEP indicates that Pennsylvania will follow in these other states' footsteps and enjoy significant economic benefits by joining RGGI. The DEP projects that joining RGGI would create an additional 27,000 jobs in our Commonwealth over the next decade, while adding \$2 billion to the state's overall economic output, or gross state product.

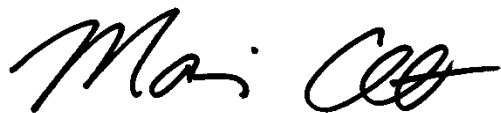
In addition to helping PA workers, joining RGGI will lower consumer costs here in the Commonwealth. Ten years after RGGI's inception, electricity prices have decreased by 5.7% in RGGI-participating states, while prices have shot up in the rest of the country by 8.6%. It is time that we take this commonsense step of joining RGGI on behalf of the Pennsylvanians who are struggling to find gainful employment and are having difficulty keeping up with their utility payments. As we emerge from our COVID-19-induced recession, it is incumbent on Pennsylvania's political leaders to step up and not stand in the way of economic growth opportunities like RGGI.

In addition to good jobs and cheaper bills, RGGI will also help provide Pennsylvanians the clean air that they deserve. We have spent nearly a year doing our part by staying indoors to stop the spread of COVID-19. Following vaccine distribution, Pennsylvanians will be eager to reconnect in person with friends, family, and loved ones. They deserve a government that is taking all of the necessary steps—like joining RGGI—to ensure that they can breathe in the clean, pollution-free air they deserve as they return to enjoying all of the amenities and outdoor activities that our state has to offer. By joining RGGI, Pennsylvania can significantly reduce the amount of sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), nitrogen oxide (NO<sub>x</sub>), and other particulate matter in our air. If we join RGGI, pollution from nitrogen oxide is expected to drop by 112,000 tons, while pollution from sulfur dioxide is expected to fall by 67,000 tons over the next decade.

I have tirelessly advocated for clean drinking water for Pennsylvanians in accordance with Article 1 Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution, and I believe that we must also take commonsense steps to protect Pennsylvanians' rights to clear air. Joining RGGI is one such step.

I urge the Environmental Quality Board to approve Pennsylvania's plan to join the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative in order to combat climate change, strengthen our economy, and improve public health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Collett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maria" and the last name "Collett" clearly distinguishable.

Senator Maria Collett